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BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Richard Cobden, The International Man. By J. A. HOBSON. With a photogravure and other illustrations. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1919. Pp. 419.

Mr. Hobson has here grouped under a very pleasing succession of chapter headings a series of letters of Richard Cobden, for the most part hitherto unpublished. These letters, further, have this also in common: they bear chiefly upon British foreign policy during the Palmerston period, and have been selected with the purpose of showing Cobden's sympathy with the principles that underlie the current international movement. They have been taken mostly from the correspondence of Cobden with Charles Sumner and with Rev. Henry Richard, for many years the active secretary of the British Peace Society. With an unimportant gap here and there, the letters form a continuous and searching commentary upon the Imperial policy of these years; and are particularly valuable in presenting the views of a genuine Liberal of the mid-Victorian era, in contrast with the spurious Liberalism of the Palmerston-Russell type.

Besides noting a few errors, mostly in dating letters, and obviously slips of the proofreader, author and printer have left little for the reviewer to offer in the way of criticism. One question, however, may be fairly raised: Has the title of the book been happily chosen? In these latter days the most of us are more or less "international" in our sympathies. But unfortunately the term has got into bad company of late—has been appropriated, in fact, by a group of impossible people who have dwelt so much upon duties that are far that they have lost touch with duties that are near, and have permitted their wits to be wafted away by their sympathies with other peoples, to the extent of denying their own nation and its claims to individual service and obedience. This certainly Cobden was not: and the author, furthermore, disclaims any intention of finding a place for Cobden in this group; in fact takes nearly a whole chapter to prove that Cobden was not an "international" in the current sense. Why select a title, then, that requires so much paring down and is, to say the least, misleading? Certainly there is nothing in these letters that so much as looks in the direction in which the latter-day

"international man" is traveling. On the contrary Cobden appears here quite the same consistent, thoroughgoing, logical individualist of the laissez faire school with which the pages of Morley have already made the reading public familiar. He is here training his guns upon questions of British foreign policy, but they are the same old guns, and the gunner is firing from the same old angle. He believes that generally governments have made a mess of things by interfering in the relations of men and nations. This does not mean that he did not believe in government; but thoroughgoing and logical democrat as he was, he would limit the function of government to holding the ring; in other words seeing fair play, while in the natural competition of trade nations as well as individuals fight out their destinies and learn to love each other. He does not approve of the British wars of his time. He has no respect for the great saber-rattling premier. He regards him as not simply a blustering egotist but a fake. In his pretense of leading the Liberals of his day, he is a mountebank who deceives the people; he is a double-face, who looks one way while he moves another. Cobden was especially bitter over the Crimean War and the Sepoy Mutiny. To him either was unnecessary and could have been avoided by honest and sincere diplomacy. The Chinese War was the result of "Sir John Bowring's monomania for entering the gates of Canton with cocked hat and feathers (p. 217). Yet Cobden was by no means a "peace-at-any-price" statesman. He believed that there were occasions when war was justified; for instance when he speaks approvingly of the American Civil War as justified by the abolition of slavery. Further, even in case of a war of which his conscience could not approve, he declared that when once war had begun, as a citizen it was his part to be silent.

If Cobden had an obsession it was in his confidence in free trade as a panacea for the world's ills. He expected free trade not only to end the social dislocations of his own country, but if the great nations of the world could be persuaded to adopt it, free trade would end all international quarreling and usher in the era of world-peace. Thus he wrote to his friend, M. Arles Dufour, in December, 1857: "Free trade is God's diplomacy and there is no other certain way of uniting people in the bonds of peace" (p. 246). He can even give a mild approval to Henry Ashworth's confidence in the "ledger as a better peace-maker than the Bible" (p. 266).

Otherwise, as revealed in these letters, Cobden seems remarkably sane and modern. Some of his strictures upon men and measures are almost prophetic. England was making a sad, bad blunder in shoulder-

ing responsibility for Turkey's good behavior (p. 182). Some day she would be ashamed of it, and "from shere self-respect must abandon her Turkish policy." She was making another blunder in her efforts to find common ground with Austria, or in encouraging Austria as a make-weight in the balance against Russia. Austria had never proved other than a "hindrance to its allies and a treacherous friend of liberty." On page 178 he writes: "First and foremost in all continental intrigues and diplomatic embroglios is the foreign office of this country." And again (p. 189) he declares: "The government of Austria is and has been for generations, remarkable for cruelty and cold-blooded treachery, the result of cowardice, owing to its really precarious hold upon the people. In my judgment the government has been a nuisance to the cause of progress and freedom in Europe, . . . and, What is it that perpetuates and will continue to sustain such a despicable rule? Why the state system of Europe which goes under the name of the Balance of Power." German influence upon English public policy, in 1856, he regards as negligible: just one of Palmerston's "bugaboos" to frighten reluctant voters back into line (pp. 185 and 186). Yet seven years later Cobden's eyes are beginning to open to the real significance of German ambition as revealed in "the Schleswig-Holstein grab." He writes: "Is it certain that these mild and visionary Teutons may not after all put Europe in flames? They are mad about Schleswig. . . . If Germany precipitates itself upon Denmark, there will be something come of it on the Rhine, Danube, and Mincio. And so completely will be the sympathies of England and Europe on the other side, that it is not easy to say what may not come of it" (p. 320).

We could hardly expect such a clear-eyed observer as Cobden to have much confidence in the friendly approaches of Napoleon III. Nor was he deceived for a single minute. Napoleon himself labored under no delusion. He heard the thunders rumbling beneath his feet, nor did he, like the later William II, ever mistake them for the echoes of his own tread. He needed friends, particularly the friendship of England. But to Cobden, Napoleon in his turn would never prove anything but a treacherous ally, simply because of the man's fundamental lack of moral courage, which must land him ultimately upon the rocks. But if Napoleon could not be trusted, the French people would prove to be the real friends of England. It is in one of Cobden's letters to M. Chevalier, in conducting the negotiations which were to lead up to the famous reciprocity treaty of 1860, that we first hear of an *entente cordiale* as the most sound and lasting basis of a real alliance between

the French and the English (p. 244). In the same spirit, also, in his letters to Sumner, he is ever dwelling upon the importance of cultivating the mutual friendship of English and Americans. He regrets the Mason-Slidell affair; he regrets the blockade of southern ports; but not more than he regrets the Alabama affair or the constant rattling of Palmerston's saber. The future happiness of the world lies in the friendship of the English, American, and French peoples.

Yet modern as is this outlook upon British foreign policy, there is nothing in these letters that even so much as hints that Cobden was in sympathy with the current positive propaganda of international co-operation, or would be were he alive today. Like other good men of his time he could oppose factory laws, and in fact most other proposals for the state regulation of industry; he could even oppose all provision for the enforcement of public sanitation or education. His views on trade unions would delight the heart of Judge Gary: "They were founded," he declares, "upon principles of brutal tyranny and monopoly" (p. 392). Political democracy he accepted. He was in full sympathy with its aims as interpreted by most of the great Liberal leaders of his day. Of an international democracy, also, to be brought about by the universal acceptance of free trade, he had caught a vision; but of an economic democracy as the necessary premise of an adequate political democracy, he had no conception.

To Cobden, human society was a comparatively simple organization. It consisted of an aggregation of individuals who would trade with each other, and be upon terms of mutual amity and eternal friendship, if only their governments would keep their clumsy hands off. He had no grasp of the infinite complication of social organism, the fathomless complex of overlapping interests, the despair of the modern internationalist, who, to secure the freedom of the individual, would wreck the old machine altogether. In Cobden's simple program of establishing world-peace and world-amity by removing all government restrictions upon trade and free intercourse between nations, there is nothing of this bitter hostility to the existing order.

Even in its milder form, as expressed in the idea of the League of Nations, it may be questioned whether internationalism, even of this innocuous kind, would have appealed to Cobden. The *laissez faire* policy which he applied to domestic problems with such remorseless logic that at times he seems heartlessly indifferent to the sufferings of the poor, and the weak, and the helpless, certainly finds its analogue, not in the League's proposal to protect the boundaries of weak states against

the strong, or to enforce peace upon the quarrelsome, but rather in the negative policy of latter-day statesmen of the Lodge-Borah type. The reviewer, at all events, after a careful reading of these letters, can find nothing to show that Cobden believed that some form of international organization was desirable, or that some function of intervention and co-operation on the part of the leading states for the protection of their weaker sisters from exploitation should be recognized in the interest of all. All of Cobden's thinking, in fact, was leading him in just the opposite direction. Intervention in any guise he feared. Above all, the attempt to justify it upon moral or altruistic grounds he hated as the last trick of the devil in leading well-meaning people astray, in giving self-seeking governments their clue.

Whatever the reader may think of the title, however, the vital interest of these letters is unquestioned. They constitute a running commentary, made by an unusually shrewd and wise observer, and soundly patriotic as well, upon the men and methods of English public life of the mid-Victorian era. The author has purposely avoided giving much space to the era of the Corn Law Agitation, for Cobden's correspondence during this redoubtable struggle has already been well sifted out by others. An entire chapter, however, is given to the correspondence with Sumner during the period of the American Civil War. Although several of the more significant of these letters have already been published in the *American Historical Review*, the entire collection has never before been printed.

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The Arbitral Determination of Railway Wages. By J. NOBLE STOCKETT, JR. Houghton Mifflin Co., 1918. Pp. 193. \$1.50 net.

Political economists have for a long time wanted to apply the so-called principles or economic laws of wages to the adjustment of industrial-wage disputes. At the same time industrial arbitrators have complained that political economy has produced no such law or principle which they could use. From an analysis of the briefs and decisions of public arbitral boards concerned with the adjustment of railway disputes in the United States and Canada, Mr. Stockett has attempted to derive and to weigh the various wage principles. The task which the author has set himself is manifestly one of considerable difficulty, but he has performed it as well as the inherent complexities of the problem permit.